(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Railways are setting up Integrated Train Enquiry System which will consist of both 'Interactive Voice Response System' (IVRS) and manual enquiry provisions for dissemination of train information as well as reservation related enquiry. This system has already been set up at Patna and Bangalore on trial basis. Based on its successful working, this is now going to be set up in all the telecom circles. Enquiry in an entire circle, will be possible by dialling common telephone number 139 without prefixing any STD code as and when the system is commissioned.

(e) and (f) No, Sir. Indian Railways have commissioned computerized Passenger Reservation System (PRS) at 1222 locations covering over 96% of the reservation load. Balance of the reservation workload is covered through manual quotas at small stations.

Loss of Railways in parcel and catering business

2170. SHRI R. KAMARAJ:
SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railways had suffered Rs. 700 crores loss in parcel services and over Rs. 400 crores in catering business last year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that more parcel trains would have to be run on long term lease over the next two months to increase the parcel loading capacity to 50 per-cent; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. Parcel and catering services are not profitable on Indian Railways when fully distributed cost taking into account the haulage cost is adopted. However, Second Class, Luggage cum Brake Van (SLR) at either end of the train is considered essential safety requirement so as to protect the passengers in the unfortunate event of accident to train. Hence, haulage cost of SLR can at best be treated as

notional. Similarly, catering services, as such, make a profit. However, in case haulage cost of pantry car of Mail/Express trains, is taken into account, the services show a loss. Pantry cars are attached as essential passenger amenity so as to provide food to passengers on running trains for which there is no other alternative. Hence, haulage cost of pantry cars can also be treated as notional.

(b) In case haulage cost of SLRs as well as pantry cars are included in costing of services, in that eventuality amount of losses suffered by the Railways for the years 2002-2003 under Broad Gauge and Metre Gauge are as under:—

In case of	Amount of loss (Rs. in crore)
Parcel, Luggage and Postal services	782.18
Catering service	410.81

(c) and (d) With a view to provide value added service to the rail customers, the scheme for leasing of parcel space in the brakevans has been introduced by the Indian Railways. Under the scheme, parcel space in the brakevans of the passenger carrying trains is leased out to the private parties by inviting bids through open tenders. On the same line the scheme for leasing of Parcel Vans on round trip basis has also been introduced. The scheme for leasing of parcel space in the Assistant Guard's Cabin of front Brakevans of passenger trains has also been introduced to facilitate transportation of small packets by Courier companies.

Railway land to a contractor

2171. DR. A. K. PATEL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railway Club (Mumbai Division) Western Railway has given a piece of railway land worth Rs. 7.6 crores free of cost to a contractor for use, violating the rules in this regard;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) since when the said contractor has been utilizing this land and the basis thereof;